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STABILITY OF THE HOXHA REGIME IN ALBANIA

25X1

Yugoslav propaganda organs commenced reporting Albanian resistance activity and rigorous government countermeasures within two days of the Moscow announcement of Stalin's illness. These reports, which continued through 13 March, noted that Albanian troop units were dispatched to the Yugoslav frontier, and invited attention to the general unpopularity of the Hoxha regime and the bad economic situation prevailing in Albania. However, an article in the London Daily Express on 6 March stating that a Yugoslav mechanized division was moved to the Albanian frontier was denied by the Yugoslav Chief of Staff.

Current evidence indicates that the Yugoslav reports of unrest in Albania are highly exaggerated. It is known that increased security measures were initiated in Albania on the day following Stalin's death, but similar precautions were taken in Bucharest and Prague and do not in themselves constitute evidence of acute internal disturbances.

An analysis of conditions in Albania prior to Stalin's death indicates that Hoxha's regime was in relatively secure control. There has been no reliable evidence since then pointing to a significant diminution of the regime's stability. When the official laments and eulogies following Stalin's death began to diminish in volume, internal economic affairs once more occupied the attention of the Tirana radio, thus indicating some degree of "normalcy" within the country.

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25X1

Yugoslavia has a real interest in eliminating the Hoxha government but has not yet given any indications of an immediate intent to overthrow the regime. Moreover, it is highly problematical that under present conditions the Tito regime would make this major move without first consulting with Athens and Washington.

25X1

Available evidence points to little likelihood of external aggression or internal revolt in Albania.

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